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LETTER DATED 17 NOVEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement on Guinea-Bissau issued on 17 November 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Permanent Representative of
Austria to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Guinea-Bissau issued on 17 November 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union (EU) welcomes the agreement reached by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the self-proclaimed military junta during the Twenty-first Summit of the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at Abuja on 1 November 1998. The signing of that agreement consolidates the ceasefire agreement signed at Praia under the joint mediation of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and ECOWAS and constitutes an important step towards peace and national reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau.

The European Union calls upon both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Praia and Abuja agreements and to work together towards the prompt implementation of the commitments therein. The Union expresses its readiness to support the organization of the presidential and parliamentary elections provided for in the Abuja agreement.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons. In this context it recalls that the European Community Humanitarian Office has moved speedily to tackle the humanitarian crisis and takes note of the readiness of several EU member States to send high-level delegations to Bissau to assess the requirements for assistance programmes. EU welcomes the decision to open Bissau port and airport, which are fundamental for the regular flow of humanitarian assistance, and urges all parties to take the necessary steps to allow the transit of humanitarian assistance and to facilitate its delivery to the populations in need.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with the present declaration.